

AN IMPROVED AIRBAG WITH INTERNAL POSITIONING PANELS FOR SEQUENTIAL DEPLOYMENT

Abstract

An improved airbag (10) is provided that can be sequentially deployed for minimizing the risk of injury to a vehicle occupant (12). This improved airbag (10) is an inflatable bag having a primary chamber (34) and a secondary chamber (36) that is adjacent to the primary chamber (34). The primary chamber (34) is configured for inflating before the secondary chamber (36). In addition, this primary chamber (34) is utilized for applying a generally downward force to the vehicle occupant's lap (14) and abdomen (16). In this way, a substantial portion of the initial deployment force of the airbag (10) is allocated to the occupant's more durable lower body. Also, the primary chamber (34) can be utilized for positioning the occupant's body (12) in a manner best suited for impacting the airbag (10). This airbag (10) is then sequentially deployed in a generally linear direction upward from the primary chamber (34) to the secondary chamber (36).